

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please add new Claims 17-38 as follows:

17. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products, comprising a housing having top, bottom and side walls;

a conveyor belt for transporting the products along a path in the housing,

a tunnel having perforated walls and enclosing the conveyor belt along the path;

a gas circulation device communicating with the tunnel via the perforated walls for circulating gas into the tunnel in the form of gas jets impinging upon the products carried by the conveyor belt, and out of the tunnel in a return channel back to the gas circulation device;

a gas conditioning device for conditioning the gas circulated by the gas circulation device;

a high pressure chamber formed by walls within the housing, the high pressure chamber having an inlet in communication with the outlet of the return channel and having an outlet in communication with the perforated walls of the tunnel, with the gas circulation device maintaining the high pressure chamber at a higher pressure than the return channel; and

at least one substantially vertical part of walls forming the high-pressure chamber being removable so as to provide access to the inside of the high-pressure chamber.

18. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the gas conditioning device is a cooling battery.

19. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the gas conditioning device is a heat exchanger.

20. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the gas conditioning device is an electrical heater.

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21. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the gas conditioning device is a moisture regulating device.

22. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the at least one substantially vertical part of the walls forming the high-pressure chamber is slideable for providing an access opening into the high-pressure chamber.

23. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the at least one substantially vertical part of the walls forming the high-pressure chamber is articulated for providing an access opening into the high-pressure chamber.

24. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein vertical parts of the walls forming the high-pressure chamber are removable all along the tunnel.

25. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 22, wherein vertical parts of the walls forming the high-pressure chamber are removable all along the tunnel.

26. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 23, wherein vertical parts of the walls forming the high-pressure chamber are removable all along the tunnel.

27. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 24, wherein substantially vertical parts of the walls forming the high-pressure chamber are removable on both sides of the tunnel.

28. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the high-pressure chamber has a top wall positioned above the tunnel and supporting the gas circulation means.

29. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the conveyor belt is foraminous, a top wall of the tunnel is perforated substantially over its whole area, and a bottom wall of the tunnel has perforated sections extending transversely of the first path.

30. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 29, wherein the bottom wall of the tunnel has a plurality of openings alternating with the perforated sections and communicating with the return channel.

31. (New) An apparatus of gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 17, wherein at least one of the side walls of the housing along the high-pressure chamber is removable so as to widen the space between the at least one wall and the high-pressure chamber.

32. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 31, wherein the side walls of the housing comprises at least two adjoining sections.

33. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 31, wherein the removable side walls are depending from telescopic arms mounted on the top wall of the housing.

34. (New) an apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 28, wherein the conveyor belt is foraminous, a top wall of the tunnel is perforated substantially over its whole area, and a bottom wall of the tunnel has perforated sections extending transversely of the first path.

35. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 34, wherein the bottom wall of the tunnel has a plurality of openings alternating with the perforated sections and communicating with the return channel.

36. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 35, wherein at least one of the side walls of the housing along the high-pressure chamber is removable so as to widen the space between the at least one wall and the high-pressure chamber.

37. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the side walls of the housing comprises at least two adjoining sections.

38. (New) An apparatus for gas treatment of products as claimed in Claim 37, wherein the removable side walls are depending from telescopic arms mounted on the top wall of the housing.